

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application and entry of this Amendment are requested. Claims 1-4 will be active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

In the Official Action the examiner has indicated that claims 1-4 are directed to allowable subject matter and would be allowed subject to resolving issues related to claim clarity and written description. It is the intent of this response to resolve the formalities rejections, delete the claims directed on the basis of prior art and place the entire application in condition for allowance.

In the Official Action the examiner objects to certain passages of claims 1-4 as to a symbol and as to the values expressed in them. More specifically, the symbols in claims 1 and 2 have been corrected to the appropriate ones. With regard to the average valence and valences set forth in claims 1-3, they have been amended to specify that for the oxidizing step the average valence is 2.8 and for the reducing step the range is from not less than 2.1 to not greater than 2.3. These changes are consistent with the examiner's comments made in the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action.

Claims 6 and 7 have been deleted thus rendering the rejection in item 4 of the Official Action moot.

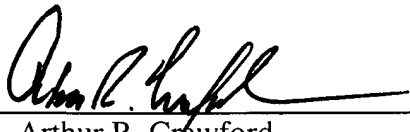
In items 5 and 6 of the Official Action the examiner indicates that subject to resolving the rejections under 35 USC §112, first paragraph (which have already been discussed above) these claims would be allowable.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims have been amended consistent with the examiner's comments and that claims 1-4, all of the claims remaining in the case, are allowable. Reconsideration, entry of this Amendment, and allowance are solicited.

KIHARA et al.
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Respectfully submitted,

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